A LITTLE HANDFUL OF *Cordial Comforts*,

Scattered thorowout several *Answers*, to Sixteen *Questions*, and *Objections* following.

Intended chiefly for the good of those that walk mournfully before God;

And are worthy to be gathered up, and regarded, of all such as wish well to their own Peace.

By RICHARD STANDFAST, M^r. of Arts, and Rector of *Christ-Church* in [illegible]

Believe, and Live.

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A Little Handfull OF Cordial Comforts,

Scattered thorowout ſeveral *Anſwers* to certain *Queſtions* and *Objections* following.

The Firſt Queſtion.

O wretched Man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the wrath to come? for my ſins are many, and mine iniquity is great; And if the Lord ſhould

deal with me according to his Justice, and my Deserts, my Portion must needs be in the Lake of Fire, with the Devil and his Angels. For the Scripture pronounceth every Man cursed, that continueth not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them, Gal. 3. 10. *Shew me therefore, (I beseech you) shew me, what course to take, to come out of this Misery; shew me the way how to get the pardon of my sin, and the favaur of God. I care for nothing but this, neither is there any thing in the World, that I do desire, in comparison of this.*

Answer.

This is that (indeed) which of all other things doth most concern us. For upon the pardon of our sins, and peace with God, depends all solid comforts while we are here, and the Eternal Salvation

tion of our most precious souls hereafter. And therefore for our better both direction and consolation in this behalf, let us take notice of this that follows.

There is a way for men to come out of the misery of sin, and to obtain and enjoy the mercy and favour of Almighty God, and that is *Faith in Christ*: This is the Way, and there is none but this; neither is there any thing in the World, that can help us to the pardon of our sins, to the love of God, and to the salvation of our souls, but only *Faith in the Lord Jesus*.

That this is the way, is apparent enough by the answer which was given by *Paul* and *Silas*, *Act.* 16. 31. For when the Keeper of the Prison cryed out with trembling, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* They made him this An-

swer, *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.* There is in *Christ* sufficiency enough, for the obtaining of our pardon, and the procuring of our peace; and there is in Faith ability enough to make us partakers of *Christs* Sufficiency. *Christ* is the onely way whereby we come unto Eternal Life, and *Faith* is the onely way whereby we come to be partakers of *Christ*; by *Faith* we come unto *Him*, and through *Him* unto God.

And that we may the better know, that there is in *Christ* sufficiency enough for the pardon of our sins, and the salvation of our souls, let us consider a little both who *Christ* is, and also what he hath done for the working out of our deliverance, and the procuring of our peace.

The Lord *Jesus Christ* is the Eternal

ternal Son of *God*, who pittying that sinfull and miserable condition, whereinto we were all brought by the Disobedience of our first Parents, undertook to mediate the matter betwixt God and us, and to reconcile us again unto God. For the better effecting of which great work, He came down from Heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin *Mary*, and was made Man, yea in all things like unto other Men, save only in Sin, that so he might the better make us free from all Sin. Being found thus in fashion as a Man, he set himself in our stead, and for us Men, and our Salvation, he became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. And by his *Obedience* and *Death* He hath perfectly alone by himself accomplished *whatever* was re-

quisite for our Salvation.

The wretchednes of our condition is briefly this: We all like Sheep have gone astray; neither have we only omitted those duties, which the Law requires, but we have also committed those evils, which the Law forbids; and as the *want of Righteousnesse* doth exclude us from the favour of God, and the Kingdome of Heaven: so the *Guiltinesse of sin* doth expose us to the Wrath of God, and the Damnation of Hell. But the Lord *Jesus Christ* hath fulfilled all *Righteousnesse*. For in his life He performed as much *Obedience*, as the Law in rigour could exact; and by suffering Death upon the Crosse, he underwent as much *Punishment*, as could be required of sinners, in the severity of Justice; and so by his *Death* and *Obedience* hath

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he provided againſt our double miſery. For by his *Sufferings* upon the Croſs, the Juſtice of God is ſatisfied, and his Wrath appeaſed; and by his *Obedience*, the Law is fulfilled, and we are Accepted. And as by his *death* comes the pardon of ſin, and deliverance from wrath: ſo by his *Obedience* comes the imputation of Righteouſneſs, and Life Everlaſting. All which, as they were done in our Nature, ſo they were done for us, and in our behalf, he ſtood in the place of ſinners, that we might be numbred among the Righteous; He took our ſins upon him, that he might put his *Obedience* upon us; the Chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him, that with his ſtripes we may be healed; He was made a Curſe for us, that he might Redeem us from it; He was made Sin for

us, that knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in Him, 2 *Cor.* 5. 22.

And the better to assure us that by his Death upon the Cross, there was paid a price sufficient enough for the procuring of our pardon, he Arose again from the Dead; which he could not have done, if the Justice of God had not been satisfied to the very full in every particular. For as Sin is the sting of Death, and the only thing that makes Death Terrible: so it is the strength of Death, and it is that only that doth give Death dominion over us: Sin is the Lock, Bar, and Bolt, that makes fast the Gates of Death; and as the door cannot be opened to let out a Prisoner, till the Bar be removed; so there is no escaping from Death, until

Sin

Sin be taken out of the way. *Christ* therefore by Riſing from the Dead, hath mightily declared unto us, that he hath paid the utmoſt Farthing of our Debts, and that by his Death he hath fully ſatisfied the Juſtice of God. So that now, by virtue of his ſufferings, the *greateſt* ſins are made pardonable, and there is a way ſet open for the *worſt* ſinners, both to Grace and Glory. *I ſay*, even for the *worſt* ſinners. There is *no man* now that can deny himſelf to be *capable* of Grace; there are too many, who from the greatneſs of Gods mercy, do without any cauſe preſume to ſin: But there is no man, who from the heinouſneſs of his ſins, hath any juſt cauſe to deſpair of mercy; For though our ſins be many, yet the mercies of God are more; though they be great, yet

yet his mercies are above them; He is rich in mercy, yea, his mercy is infinite, so that though he have spent much mercy already upon our Fore-Fathers, yet he hath mercy enough in store for us also; with him there is plenty of forgiveness, and his mercy endureth for ever. And the merits of *Christ* are of the same nature, for he is *Mighty to save*, and he is the *same for ever*, and through the riches of these merits of *Christ*, there is a way set open, even for the *worst sinners*, to become partakers of the riches of the mercies of God. Now if *any man* sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, *Jesus Christ* the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, *&c.* 1 *John* 2. 1, 2. And though the time of his abode upon Earth in the days of his flesh were but short, though

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his sufferings were but for a season; yet such was, and is the dignity of his person, (being the Eternal Son of God) that his *Sufferings* and *Obedience* are *infinitely meritorious*, and his blood is able to cleanse us from *all* unrighteousness: So that we may well say with the Apostle, *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that dyed, or rather who is risen again, and now maketh Intercession for us, Rom.* 8. 33, 34. But let no man turn this doctrine of comfort to a liberty of sinning: against the *greatest sins* there is hopes in *Christ* for *penitent Believers*. But because there is mercy with God, shall we therefore go on in sin? God forbid; there is mercy with him, and therefore he must be feared. But if any man shall presume to sin, because there is mercy with God, through *Jesus Christ*; instead

ſtead of mercy, that man is like to meet with nothing but Juſtice: For as mercifull as God is, and as all-ſufficient as the Death of *Chriſt* is, there is no mercy for ſuch as go on ſtill in their wickedneſs.

And thus you ſee that *Chriſt* is mighty enough to ſave us from all our ſins, and to reconcile us unto *God*: Now that we may have benefit by this ſufficiency of *Chriſt*, we muſt lay hold upon it by a lively faith. This is that which unites us unto *Chriſt*, and makes us one with him; This is that which gives us intereſt in him, and makes us partakers of his merits; This makes the *death* and *obeaience* of *Chriſt* as verily our own, and as effectual for the pardon of our ſins, and the ſalvation of our ſouls, as if they had been performed by our very ſelves.

ſelves. So that if we do truly *Believe in the Lord Jeſus*, then is *God* well pleaſed with us for his ſake; and by virtue of his merits being made ours by faith, our ſins are all pardoned, and our ſouls and bodies ſhall be Eternally ſaved. And ſo much the Scripture doth plainly teſtifie in ſeveral places. As *John* 3. 16. *God* ſo loved the World, that he gave his onely begotten Son, that *whoſoever believeth in him*, ſhould not periſh, but have Life Everlaſting. And again, *Acts* 10.43. Through his Name, *whoſoever believeth in him*, ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins, (be they never ſo many, never ſo heinous.) And again, *Acts* 13. 38, 39. Be it known unto you, that *through this Man* is Preached unto you the Forgiveneſs of Sins. And *by him all that believe* are juſtified from

from all those things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of *Moses*. By the Law of *Moses* we could never have been acquitted either from the *Guiltiness of Sin, or from the Wrath of God*: But we are delivered from *both, by Faith in Christ*; for by it we obtain the forgiveness of our sins, and the salvation of our souls.

And thus it is manifest, *That Christ is the Way by which we are to obtain the pardon of sin, and peace with God; and that* Faith *is the way whereby we are made partakers of the merits of* Christ *for our Justification and Salvation.* Proceed we now in a word, to shew that *nothing but Christ* can reconcile us unto *God*, and that *nothing but Faith* can make us partakers of *Christ* for our Reconciliation.

There is no way whereby to come unto *God*, but *onely Christ*:

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le is onely in *Christ* that *God* is well pleased; neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other Name under the Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, *Acts* 4. 12. Neither is there any other means on our part, whereby to receive *Christ*, but *onely Faith*; And yet unless we do receive him, we get no benefit by him; and therefore unless we do believe in him, we shall perish in our sins. And to this purpose speaks our Saviour, *John* 3. 36. *He that believeth on the Son hath Everlasting Life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him.* See the summ of all this, in that place of St. *John*, 1 *Epist.* 5. *Chap.* 11, 12, and 13 *Verses*: *God* hath given to us Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath

Life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not Life. These things have I written to you, that believe in the Name of the Son of *God*, that ye may know that ye have Eternal Life, and that ye may believe in the Name of the Son of *God*. By which place it is plain, that there is a way to Life; that *Christ* is the way to it; that Life is so in him; that it is in no other but him; that it is so in him, that by believing in him we obtain Life, and that it is so in him, that without believing in him, we get no benefit at all by him. And thus you have the truth of the former Answer Enlarged and Confirmed, according to it's severall Branches; by which it is manifest, *That Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and nothing else but onely Faith in him*, can help us to the pardon of sin, the Love of

of God, and the Salvation of our Souls.

Hereupon it may be thus replyed.

The Second Question.

IF I cannot obtain the pardon of my sins, and the Favour of God, without Faith *in* Christ, *I doubt my condition is woful, and that I am yet in my sins, and liable unto wrath. For I fear that I have not this Faith in* Christ, *and that I do not as yet believe in him. Shew me therefore (I pray you) how I may be comforted against this fear, and how I may know whether I do believe in* Christ, *Yea, or No?*

Answer.

Doutleſs if we do not believe in *Chriſt*, our condition is woful: For

For there is no ſalvation *in any other*; and without *Faith* in him, we get no benefit by him, but we are in our ſins, and the obligation unto wrath is in full power and force againſt us. For though the ranſome, which Chriſt paid by his Death upon the Croſs, be a ranſome abundantly ſufficient for the ſins of the *whole world*; yet the benefit of that Death of his is beſtow'd on none, but upon ſuch conditions as *God* himſelf pleaſeth; which conditions, for ſuch as be of years, are *Faith* and *Repentance*; which if we want, we ſhall be ſure to periſh in our ſins, not out of any defect in *Chriſt*, but onely becauſe we want thoſe conditions, whereby we come to have intereſt in him, and to be partakers of his Merits. Now that we may the better know whether we have this Faith in us

yea, or no, (and so neither be deceiv'd with vain hopes, nor yet discomforted with false fears,) consider this which follows, and see what Answer you can make to these several demands.

Are you sensible of the misery wherein you are by reason of your sins? And do you finde that you need a *Saviour*? Do you know who is the *Saviour* of the World? Do you know in some good measure who Christ is, and what he hath done for us, and what the benefits that are to be had by him? Do you know what a necessity there is of having of him, and what a misery it is to be without him, and what we must do, if we would have any benefit by him? And do you verily *believe* that *Christ Jesus*, and none but he, is the *Saviour* of the World, and that he hath both done

done and ſuffered, as the Scriptures Teſtifie of him? Do you verily believe that there is no way to Heaven but Chriſt, that there is no way to get Chriſt but Faith, and that there is no part to be had in him, but by renouncing all other Lords, and all other Saviours, and by adhering *wholly* unto him for all our Conſolation and Salvation? And do you now *Deſire from the heart* to be made partaker of Chriſt? And do you ſincerely endeavour to accept of him, and to embrace him? And can you be content for his ſake, to forſake all things, and to undergo any miſery, rather then to part with him? Can you be content to take him (as we ſay) *for better for worſe*, and not onely for your *Ieſus*, to ſave you from your ſins, but alſo for your *Lord*, to command and diſpoſe

pose of you at his pleasure? And is it your care to know his *Will*? And is it your endeavour to yield him an *Universal Obedience*? And is it your practise in obedience unto him, to exercise your self to keep a Conscience void of offence both toward *God*, and toward *Men*, and constantly and conscionably to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live godly, and righteously, and soberly in this present world? Do you thus *Accept* of Christ, and *Submit* unto him? Nay, is it your *hearty desire*, *and unfained endeavour* so to do? Then you may be sure that you have some degrees of True Faith in *Jesus Christ*, and therefore that *Christ* is yours, that *God* is yours, that *All* is yours. For this is such a qualification as hath the promise, both of the Life that now is, and

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also of that, that is to come.

By the Questions we may examine our condition. For after this manner is Faith wrought in us; Such are the preparatives, such is the nature, and such are the effects of a True Faith, as are implyed in these questions; So that if we can in some good measure make understanding and affectionate answers to them all. Then we may be sure that we have a True Faith in *Christ*. But if either we know him not, or desire not to accept of him, or care not to obey him, we have then cause to think that we do not believe in him; and if we think otherwise, we do but deceive our souls.

Now if upon examination had, we finde that we want Faith, we must be diligent in using the means whereby to get it, which

is by reading and hearing of the Word of God, and conferring about it. For Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word. If we finde that we have this Faith, we must be careful to keep it, and to increase it, by the Word, by the Sacraments, and by Prayer.

The Third Question.

Upon this that hath been spoken, another question may be raised to this purpose. I do in some measure know who Christ *is, and I do believe that he is a Saviour All-sufficient, and that there is no other way to Salvation, but Him, and that whosoever believeth in him shall not Perish: and I my self would fain believe in him. But how may I know that I have right to believe in him, and that the invitations to Faith do concern me? How*

may I know whether I should be welcome, or not, if I should be so bold as to come unto him?

Answer.

For our encouragement herein, and that we may come the more boldly unto the Throne of Grace, we must know, that *Christ* is a Common Saviour, he is the Saviour of the World; and in regard of the All-sufficiency of his merits, there is not one of those, whose nature he took, unto whom his merits are not communicable; neither is there any one, who in that respect may not truly be said to be savable. *The Promise is made to You, and to your Children, and to all that be afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, Acts 2, 39.* Now if you desire to know, whether you be one of

of those, whom he doth call to believe in him; consider then whether or no, you be sensible of your misery, and burdened with your sins; whether your desire be to be eased of your sins, and to be partaker of Christ, and of those benefits and comforts that be in him. For if we be thus qualified, we may be confident that we are of the number of those, whom he doth seriously invite to come unto him, and to depend upon him. And hereof you have a witness in your self, and Gods own hand to shew for it, to your greater comfort. For these are his own words: Come unto me *all ye that labour and be heavy laden*, and I will give you rest, *Mat.* 11. 28. And again, *If any man thirst*, let him come unto me and drink, *Iohn* 7. 37. Unto such *thirsty souls* was Christ

sent, he came to speak peace to such as are *weary*, and *broken-hearted*, and to set at liberty such as are *bruised*. So that if we, finding what a misery it is to be in sin, and to want a Saviour, have thereupon an earnest desire to be delivered from this misery; we may be as sure, that he calls upon us to come unto him, as if our very Names were specified in these invitations: Being thus qualified, we may come boldly, and upon our coming shall be sure to finde Rest; But without this badge we have no warrant at all to expect a welcome. *They that do thus hunger and thirst after Righteousness shall be filled; but they that be rich* in their own conceits, and are not sensible of any wants, *these he sends empty away*.

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The Fourth Question.

But if I finde that I want this sorrow, what course should I take, to bring my heart to be humbled for my sins.

Answer.

To this end let a Man examine himself by the Law of God. For by the Law is the knowledge of sin. And let him duly think upon that fearfull Curse of God, whereunto every the least sin doth make us liable. Let him diligently consider, how ugly and lothsome sin doth make us in the sight of God, and what a fearfull thing it is to be deprived of the Love of God, and the Joyes of Heaven, and what a misery it is to be exposed to the wrath of

God, and the torments of Hell. Let him seriously ponder what a misery it is to lose the Soul. Let him throughly weigh the nature of Eternity, and the strictness of that Account that is to come; and the severity of that sentence, which in that last and dreadfull Day shall be pronounced upon all impenitent sinners, when they shall be adjudged to that Everlasting Fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels. All these are of singular use to wound our souls, and to affect our hearts with sorrow for our sins. It is the Law that makes way for the Gospel: For thus *John* the Baptist by denouncing the judgments of God upon wicked courses, prepared the way for our Blessed Saviour. But especially, let him consider how great things God hath done for him.

him. For as there is no greater obligation to obedience, then the loving kindnes of the Lord: So there is nothing that doth more aggravate our sins, and so consequently our misery; And therefore nothing that can tend more to the breaking of the heart, then the consideration of the bounty, and long suffering of God to us-ward. And this plainly appears by that course which the Prophet *Nathan*, at the Lord's appointment took with *David*, 2 *Sam.* 12. For by setting before his eyes *Gods* many and wonderful mercies vouchsafed, and his own extream ingratitude, and ill requital of so great goodness, he was constrained to cry out with shame and sorrow, *I have sinned against the Lord.*

And amongst all the mercies of God, there is none that doth

more deserve to take up all our thoughts, then that departure of Christ, which he accomplished at *Jerusalem*; Neither is there any thing that doth more tend, either to preserve us from sin, or to humble us for our failings, then the death of our Saviour.

For suppose the Lord Jesus should present himself unto us, when we are about to commit any sin, or after we have done it, as he was hanging upon the Cross, with his sides scourged, his face buffetted, his hands and feet nailed, his head crowned with Thorns, his very heart pierced, his whole body upon the rack, and trickling down with drops of blood, and speaking unto us after this, or the like manner: "Behold, if ever sorrows "were like unto my sorrows; "And yet all this was but the pu-

"nishment

"nishment of thy sins. It is thy
"sins that have brought me to all
"these torments; and canst thou
"delight in that which was the
"cause of such misery? All this
"have I done for thy good, and
"is this the requital of my Love?
"I have born thy sins, that thou
"might'st be eased; mine hands
"were bound, that thine might
"be freed; my sides were scour-
"ged, that thine might be spa-
"red; my cheeks were buffet-
"ted, that thine might be kist;
"my head was crowned with
"thorns, that thine might be
"crowned with glory; and is
"this thy kindness to thy friend,
"thus to return me hatred for
"my good will? Hast thou not
"put me to pains enough al-
"ready, but that thou must rake
"in my wounds, and make a
"sport of my misery? Or if thou

"wilt not pitty me, yet pitty thy "self. For can that be light to "thee, which cost me so heavy? "Or shalt thou escape the cup, "that art a sinner, when my be-"loved Father would not spare "me that was but a Surety?

Suppose (I say) that the Lord *Jesus* should present himself and speak unto us, after this or the like manner, would not such a sight make our bowels to yearn, and such words cut us to the very heart? Doubtless it were enough to make the dryest eyes to wish for tears of blood, and the hardest heart of the most obstinate sinner, to become in the midst of his body, like melting wax, thus to hear, and to look upon him whom they have pierced: Yea it is impossible for any man to think on this, and to go on in sin, but such as could be content to Crucifie

cifie again the Lord of Glory.

And thus you see, what are the chiefest helps to humiliation, and by what means our hearts may be brought to be deeply affected with sorrow for our sins.

Hereupon a timorous heart will be ready to reply yet further after this manner.

The Fifth Question.

BY this course, and by these, and the like Meditations, I confess that I have been brought in some measure to be sorry for my sins, and now I would fain be eased of them; And it is my desire to believe in Christ, *but I fear that as yet I am not enough* humbled; *I fear I have not so* great measure *of sorrow, as may make me capable of this invitation; And my heart is so hardned, that I cannot grieve and mourn for my sins*

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so much as I should, and would do; and therefore I fear, that as yet I have no right to the comforts of the Gospel.

Answer.

True it is, that sorrow for sin makes ready an heart prepared for the *Lord*; and as usually in the course of Nature, there is no birth without some pain: So in the work of Grace, there is no regeneration, (that of Infants in Baptisme excepted,) without some sorrow. But as there are degrees of pain in the Natural birth: So in the Spiritual birth, there are degrees of sorrow. Some Women have a quick Dispatch, others have a more tedious Travel: And so it is in the New Birth, all are not pained alike. Some there be that go mourning all the day long, yea day after day, whereas

whereas unto others, heavineſs indures but as it were for a night, and joy cometh in the morning. We muſt know therefore, and that for our comfort, that it is not the *quantity*, but the *quality* of ſorrow, that God looks after; neither matters it ſo much, how great our ſorrow be, as how true it is.

If a Youth, upon due examination had, be found fit for the Univerſity, his Tutor never demands how long he hath been at School, how harſhly he hath been dealt withall, how often he hath been whipt, before he could come to that perfection; All that he looks after is, whether or no he be fit to be admitted: So it fares with us; The Law is our School-Maſter to bring us unto Chriſt; And this it doth, partly by diſcovering unto us our ſins, whereby we

we see that we need a Saviour; and partly by threatning of us with the curse, whereby we are made more carefull to look out after this Saviour, and more willing to accept of him, and for our own ease to submit unto him, when once we have found him. Now when we can be content to accept of *Christ* upon any terms, then are we ready for him, then are we fit to be admitted into him. And when we do seek unto *Christ* for this admission, he regards not so much, how long we were at School under the Law, how often we were lashed by it, or how sorely we have smarted under it: But all that he looks after is, whether we be fit to come unto him. Consider therefore with your self, had you ever such a sight and sorrow for your sins, as made you weary of them; and

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out of love with them; and willing to be eased of them; and desirous of Interest in *Christ*, and ready to accept of *Christ* upon any Terms, rather then to goe without him? Is it your grief that you cannot be more sorrowfull, and do not you desire as much to be kept from sin for the time to come, as to have all that pardoned that is past? Surely, if you stand thus affected, then are you fitted, and made ready for *Christ*; and whether your sorrow were great or little, yet it is a token, that it was a true and a godly sorrow, because it worketh repentance unto salvation, never to be repented of.

It may be yet further objected, Thus:

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The Sixth Question.

I Confess that I have been grieved for my sins, and I have been desirous to believe in Christ: *But I fear that my Sorrow is not good, nor my Faith sound, because my obedience is so faulty: For I am not so willing to forsake all my sins, nor so carefull to yield* Christ *Obedience, as I should be; or if I am willing so to do, yet mine infirmities, and my failings are such, and so many, that I fear my sorrow, and my faith, are not such as they ought to be.*

Answer.

Certain it is, that sorrow for sin will nothing avail us without amendment of Life; The wicked must *forsake* his wayes, if he expect pardon, *Isa.* 55. 7. And it is he

he that confeſſeth his ſins, and *forſaketh them*, that ſhall find mercy, *Prov.* 28. 13. If we willingly allow our ſelves in the practice of *any thing* diſpleaſing unto *God*, our condition is dangerous. If we ſay that we abide in *Chriſt*, we muſt walk as he walked, or elſe we deceive our own ſouls, 1 *John* 2, 6. If we ſay that we have fellowſhip with *God*, and yet walk in darkneſs, we lye, and the truth is not in us, 1 *John* 1. 6. And if it be not our ſtudy and exerciſe to yield *Chriſt* an Univerſal Obedience, our Faith is but Preſumption; our Peace is but Security; our Hopes are but Shadows; and our Expectation will Periſh.

But if we have *an hearty deſire, and a ſincere endeavour in all things to live honeſtly*, we may not from our failings and imperfections, preſently conclude that we are

not

not sanctified at all, that we have no Faith, no Interest in *Christ*, no love of *God* in us. For perfection is not to be attained unto, while we be in the body; But *sincerity* is that which may be had, and affords unto us matter of comfort; For the Lord loves them that do *follow after Righteousness*, *Pro.* 15. 9. And they whose sincere desire and endeavour it is to have respect to all the commandments, are accepted of him. If it be our unfained desire, study and endeavour, in Obedience unto *Christ*, to do whatsoever he commandeth; If it be our care to cleanse our selves from all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the fear of God, and not wickedly to depart from him in any thing: I say, if it be our unfained desire, study and endeavour so to do, we

may

may safely conclude, notwithstanding all our imperfections, that our sorrow is good, and our faith sound, and that our sins are pardonable, and our service is accepted, and our souls shall be saved. For in *Gods* account, and acceptation, that goes for a *clean life* which is not stained with *wilfull pollutions*, and whose obedience is extended to the utmost of his knowledge, and hath withall a purpose to amend what *God* shall hereafter make him know to be sinfull; to that man is allowed the opinion of gracious.

See further of this point in Answer to Objection 16.

The Seventh Question.

If these things be so, I find then that my condition at the present is good; And, if I were sure to dye in this

Estate,

Estate, I make no doubt but I should be happy. But I fear that I shall not continue in this Condition; For my Enemies are Many, and Mighty, and Crafty, and Watchfull, and I my self am prone to Sin, and apt to fall from my own Steadfastness; And I finde by experience, that many who have begun in the Spirit, have ended in the Flesh, and their latter Ends have been worse then their Beginnings. This makes me to fear that I shall not continue faithfull unto the death; And yet without this continuance, I shall never Obtain the Crown of Life.

Answer.

All these things I confesse are true; such are our Enemies, such is our Weakness; and the Misery of those that do turn back from the Holy Commandment given unto them, is such, that it had

had been better for them not to have known the way of Truth, 2 *Pet.* 2. 21. For they ſhall loſe thoſe things that they have done, and their portion ſhall be with unbelievers. So that a Man cannot chuſe but have cauſe to fear. Nevertheleſs, there is comfort in *God* againſt this fear alſo; Yea, *This very fear of Falling Away*, hath in it matter of conſolation, for it is a means to keep us from departing from *God*, *Ier.* 32. 40. *And I will make an Everlaſting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me.*

Many there be, that having begun well, do yet at length grow weary of well doing, and ſo loſe what they have done; And therefore let him that thinketh that he ſtandeth, take heed leaſt he fall:

But

But yet let not our hearts be troubled, let us not be dismayed with fear; for the perseverance of such as are *justified and sanctified in deed and in truth*, is certain, and the foundation of *God* standeth sure, the *Lord* knoweth who are his, and he knoweth how to deliver them out of Temptation. In further Answer to this Objection, and the better to comfort us against this fear, take special notice of these Texts of Scripture, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. *Who are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.* John 10. 27, 28, 29. *My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them Eternal Life, and they shall never Perish, neither shall any Man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater then all: And no Man is able*

able to pluck them out of my Fathers hand. 2 Chro. 16. 9. *For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him.*

The Eighth Question.

But if the Perseverance, and so Salvation of such as are in deed and in truth *the Saints of God, be so sure and certain, what mean those frequent caveats which we meet with in the Scripture? What mean those frequent exhortations to Perseverance?*

Answer.

The Perseverance of such is sure and certain, howbeit *God* brings it to pass by means; It is wrought in them by *God*, and yet their

their own endeavours also are required; And these Caveats and exhortations are the means which God hath sanctified for the exciting of their endeavours, and for their preservation from Apostacy.

Caveats we have many, and many Threatnings; Exhortations many, and many Promises; such as are, *Take heed to your selves. Watch in all things. Be steadfast and unmovable, continue faithfull unto the Death, and I will give thee the Crown of Life. The latter end of back-sliders shall be worse then their beginning*, &c. By which, and other like passages, we are not to think either that perseverance is in our own power, or that the condition of *Gods Peculiar People* is mutable in regard of him; But they do imply how prone we are to sin, in regard of our selves; And they shew, that our

our own endeavours are required for the working out of our salvation; and they are the means sanctified of *God*, for the preventing of sin, and for the exciting of our care, and so for the preserving of us unto his heavenly Kingdome.

And whereas we are said to be kept by the power of God, We may not so understand it, as if we our selves might in the mean time sit still and do nothing: We are kept by *God*, and yet we also must keep our selves: It is *God* that keepeth us, and yet we also must watch and pray. But we are said to be kept by *God*, for our greater encouragement. For if our endeavours be sincere, though they be but weak, yet they will be effectuall, because we have such a mighty helper: And withall it is to teach us, to

whom we ought to aſcribe all the glory when our endeavours become effectual. It is *God* that muſt have the glory of it, for it is by his power that we are kept, who worketh in us both to will and to do, of his own good pleaſure.

Be ſtrong therefore in the Lord, and in the power of his might; He that is with us is mightier then they that be againſt us. And therefore we need not fear; for neither the power, nor the policy of Hell ſhall prevaile againſt the People of God; And the mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it, *Mat.* 16. 18.

The Ninth Queſtion.

I *Make no doubt of the power of God, I know that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him: but I doubt of his will, I fear that he will not do it.* An-

Answer.

Surely this is a needless fear; for his love is everlasting, his gifts and calling are without Repentance; and whom he loveth, to the End he loveth them. And therefore *Fear not, the Lord will not forsake his People, for his own Names sake, because it hath pleased him to make you his People,* 1 Sam. 12. 22. So that if once he hath loved us so well, as to set us apart for himself; He loveth himself better, then to forsake us. And though our unworthinesse deserve that *God* should deny us, yet his Faithfulnes is such, that he cannot deny himself.

Think therefore upon his love; Meditate upon his Power; Call to mind his romise; Forget not his Truth; And commit the keep-

ing of your ſoul unto him in well doing. Care you to do well, *God* will care for the reſt: For *He preſerveth the Souls of his Saints, he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked*, Pſal. 79. 10.

The Tenth Queſtion.

But ſeeing that mine own endeavours are required for the working out of my Salvation; And ſeeing that my aſſurance of Salvation cannot be found, unleſs my care and diligence, in the conſtant uſing of all good means tending thereunto, be every way anſwerable: Shew me, I pray you, by what means I may be enabled to continue patiently in well doing, that ſo at the laſt I may obtain eternal life.

Anſwer.

Hereunto many things are uſeful,

useful, the chiefest of which are these following.

1. *Labour to be sincere*, by considering that all our wayes are before *God*. To walk before *God* is the way to be perfect, and sincerity is the way to perseverance. For the Righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands, shall grow stronger and stronger, *Iob* 17. 6. But he whose heart is not upright before *God*, will start aside in the time of Tryal; See 1 *John* 2. 19.

Labour to overcome the World, that so neither the cares and glory of it may too deeply affect us, nor yet the crosses and troubles of it, too much affright us. For each of these are great hinderances to the practice of piety. Persecution is that heat, that doth wither the word, and by it some are made to deny their Master;

And the cares of the World, are the thorns that choke the Word, and a means whereby it becomes unfruitfull. *For the love of Money, is the root of all Evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, 1 Tim. 6. 10.* Arm your self therefore against both these; and to this end consider with your self, and think often upon that of our Saviour, *Mat. 16. 26. What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?* And upon that, *Mat. 8. 38. He that is ashamed of me, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed,* &c. And upon that, *2 Tim. 2. 12. If we Suffer with him, we shall Reign with him: But if we Deny him, he will also Deny us.* And learn to discern between those things that be seen, and the things that be not seen. For the things that be seen, are but

but Temporall; but the things which are not seen are Eternal, 2. Cor. 4. 18.

3. *Watch in all things*, for our Enemies are many, and security is dangerous, and sin is so deceitfully, that it will quickly harden us: And this is certain, a Man never yields to his own corrupt disposition for the committing of any evil, but he is ordinarily more willing to the second act, then to the first; And who then can tell how far he may go astray, that doth but once give way to his own Corruption.

4. *Labour to grow in Grace*, and in the knowledge of our *Lord* and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, by considering that our Labour cannot be in vain in the *Lord*. This *endeavour to grow in Grace* is a special means to keep us from being drawn away with the errour of the wicked:

ked: But standing still, is in danger of turning back, and lukewarmness is the way to grow key-cold.

3. *Despise not Prophesying* if you would not quench the Spirit; If we would not be weary of well-doing, we must wait upon the Word: *For what is able to build us up, and to give us an Inheritance among them that are Sanctified,* Acts 20. 32.

And lastly, *We must pray without ceasing,* that he who hath begun a good work in us, would also finish it, and grant that our whole Spirit, Soul and Body may be kept blameless unto the coming of our *Lord Jesus.* This is the way to continue in well doing, and so running we shall obtain.

The

The Eleventh Question.

But though my soul may be cared for, yet my body may be in want. I want already many things that be necessary; Or at least I fear that I shall want such things as be needfull for me; And this fear makes my life the more fearfull.

Answer.

Doubtless, if our souls be cared for, other things may the lesse trouble us; Howbeit against those things also there is matter of comfort in *Iesus Christ*. He that regards the soul, will not neglect the body; and he knows what we have need of: And if we be of his family, he will be sure to provide for us. He is *able* enough to help us, for the whole Earth is

the *Lords*, and the fulneſs thereof: And of his *will* we have no cauſe to doubt, for he hath promiſed that if we ſeek firſt the Kingdome of *God*, and his Righteouſneſs, *all theſe things* ſhall be added as it were over and above, and into the bargain, *Mat.* 6.33. And he hath ſaid, that he will withhold *no good thing* from them that fear him, *Pſal*, 34. 9, 10. Whereupon we may ſafely conclude, that if he keep any thing from us, it will be good for us to be without it: So that we may well ſay with the Prophet *David*, *The Lord is my Shepherd, I cannot want*, Pſal. 23. 1. For he *that hath given us* Chriſt, *how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all things?* Rom. 8. 32.

The

The Twelfth Question.

I Have been a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief; I have gone through much Misery already, and many are the Crosses and Troubles that are upon me at the present, and I fear that there be more and worse yet to come: So that sometimes I begin to think that the Lord doth not love me, and I am ready to doubt what will become of me; And I fear that my Patience will one day be tryed, and that I shall faint in the day of Evil. Shew me therefore, I pray you, how I may be comforted against this fear; and how I may be enabled to wade through all with Christian patience.

Answer.

True it is, that the crosses and troubles, which men shall meet withall

withall in the way to Heaven, are matters of offence, and unto some they are very powerfull, turning them back from the hope laid before them, to the embracing of this present World. But if we would think upon things aright, in the midst of misery, we should have comforts enough to refresh our souls. Neither is there any trouble that can befall us, in the midst of which they have not matter of strong consolation, *which being justified by Faith, are at peace with God, through Jesus Christ.*

Now to the end that we may be the better comforted against all crosses, let us make use of these few considerations following.

1. Consider that it is no new or strange thing to be exercised with Afflictions; Neither are Crosses and Troubles *of them-*

ſelves an argument of *Gods* hatred, but rather a token of his love, and a witneſs of our adoption, if we bear them patiently, and make good uſe of them. There is not any affliction incident to the nature of man, which ſome one or other, even of *Gods* own dear Servants and Children, have not been exercifed withall. Look upon *David*, and *Jacob*, and *Joſeph*, and *Iob*, and *Paul*, and all that cloud of Witneſſes made mention of *Heb.* 11. And we ſhall finde, that through *many Afflictions*, they all entred into the Kingdome of *God*. Nay, look upon the Captain of our Salvation, and we ſhall finde, that even he himſelf was made *perfect through Sufferings*, *Heb.* 2. 10. And this muſt needs be a ſpecial means to enable us to bear all with the greater patience, when we ſhall

know and consider, that though our afflictions be for number many, and for nature grievous, yet they are but the measure of our Betters.

2. Consider that *God* hath promised never to leave us nor forsake us, *Heb.* 13. 5. And his presence alone is support sufficient even in the worst of miseries. How can *Iacob* be afraid to go down into *Egypt*, when *God* himself hath said, he will go with him? *Gen.* 46. 34. *God* hath made the like promise unto us, and therefore if he bid us go into troubles; If he command us to walk even through the valley of the shadow of death, yet we need fear no evil, as long as he is with us: For, *if God be with us, who can be against us?* Rom. 8. 31.

3. Consider, that unto such as

do

do believe in *Christ*, the nature of Afflictions is wholly altered; for their ſting is pull'd out, and their bitterneſs is allayed: They may ſavour of *anger*, of *wrath* they do not; *Croſſes* they may be, *Curſes* they are not: They may be *Chaſtiſements* for our correction, but they are not *Iudgements* for our confuſion. For *Chriſt* hath ſuffered *whatever wrath* was due unto us by reaſon of our ſins: And if we be once reconciled unto *God* by Faith in *Chriſt*, there is more matter of comfort in the aſſurance of his Love, then there can be of dejection in the greateſt trouble.

4. Conſider that *God* intends nothing but good unto us in his ſharpeſt dealings with us: For it is all to humble us, and to prove us, and to do us good at our later end; all is for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holineſs.

For

For *hereby* he reforms what hath *been amiss* in us in times past; *hereby our iniquity shall be purged, and this is the fruit, to take away our sin,* Isa. 27. 9.

Hereby he prevents sin in us for the time to come, as he did St. *Paul*, unto whom there was sent the Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should have been exalted above measure, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7.

Hereby he doth wean us from the Love of the World, and Worldly vanities. As long as all goes well with us, we are ready to say with S. *Peter*, *It is good to be here*: But when once we begin to be Afflicted, then presently with the *Prodigal*, our *minds are homewards.*

Hereby he deals with us as the Husband-man doth by the Vine, he pares and prunes us, to make

us

us the more fruitfull, *Iohn* 15. 2.

Hereby he doth exercise our Faith and Patience; and makes tryal of our sincerity, as he did by *Iob*. And so in this he lays the ground of our greater glory: For greater Afflictions require greater Patience; and the greater our Patience is, the greater shall be our future Happiness.

And the consideration of this must needs be a means to perswade us to Patience. For if we can willingly endure smarting-water for the clearing of our eyes; and bitter Pills, and sharp lances for the health of our bodies; much more ought we to bear with patience the smarting hand of Almighty *God* for the health of our souls. There is no Affliction indeed joyous, for the present, but grievous; but after it worketh the peaceable fruit of

Righte-

Righteousnes to such as are exercised thereby, *Heb.* 12. 11.

Consider that if we do continue faithfull unto the death, we shall receive a Crown of Life. And if we do but have an eye to *that recompence of reward*, we shall easily be drawn, as *Moses* was, to esteem the *reproach of Christ* greater Riches then the Treasures of *Egypt*; and to chuse rather to suffer Affliction with the People of *God*, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, *Heb.* 11. 25, 26. For the happiness of that Kingdom, which is to come, is such, that our Blessed Saviour accounts it matter of *Comfort* against all *fear* whatsoever, as it doth plainly appear by those words of his, *Luke* 12. 32. *Fear not little Flock, for it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdome.* Where the onely Argument

ment that he makes use of for the encouraging of his little flock, is the hopes of the Kingdom. And again by that place, *Mat.* 5. 11, 12. *Blessed are ye, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsly for my sake. Rejoyce, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in Heaven, for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.* Wherein our Saviour doth hearten his Disciples against Persecution, only upon this ground, because their reward should be great in Heaven. And surely in S. *Paul's* Computation, the present Affliction is not worthy the speaking of, in regard of that glory that shall be revealed, *Rom.* 8. 18. Neither is there indeed, any comparison at all between them; for the one is but a *light & momentary affliction*, the other is a far *more exceeding*

exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17. So that this goodnesse of *God* in the Land of the Living, is enough to keep us from fainting under the heavieſt burden: For though our outward Man decay, yet while we have an eye to this joy ſet before us, our inward Man will be renewed day by day. Fitly therefore is the hope of this Happineſs, called the *Anchor of the Soul*, and the *Helmet of Salvation*; for by this *Anchor* we are preſerved in the deep waters, by this *Helmet* we are Protected in the times of danger; and by flying unto this *Hope*, we are ſure to finde refuge in the day of evil.

And thus we may be comforted againſt evils preſent. Now as for thoſe that are yet to come, we may thus reſolve; *Either they ſhall not come at all*: For *God* will ſtand

ſtand between us and harm, and keep us quiet from fear of evil: Without his providence nothing can befall us, and therefore nothing ſhall befall us to do us hurt: For he is a *God* that delighteth in the proſperity of his Servants.

Or if they do come, *Yet the Lord will deliver us out of all*: there ſhall be an end. Enlargement will come, and he will deliver his people, even becauſe he hath a favour unto them.

And in the mean time, *He will ſupport us in them*, till deliverance do come; and his grace will be ſufficient for us. *For God is faithfull, and will not ſuffer us to be tempted above that we are able: But with the temptation alſo make away to eſcape, that we may be able to bear it*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13.

And *he will alſo give us beneſit by them*; For he maketh all to work to-

together for good, to thoſe that love him, *Rom.* 8, 28. And thus we may be comforted againſt our fears alſo. In a word, there's none can know the way to Heaven, better then he that dwells there. And therefore which way ſoever God leads us, it is ſafe to follow him. The uneaſineſs of the way, makes us think that it is the fartheſt way about; but the Lord knows it is the next way home. And whatſoever they ſeem to us, *Yet all the wayes of the Lord are Mercy and Truth, unto ſuch as keep his Covenant, and his Teſtimonies*, Pſal. 25. 10.

The Thirteenth Queſtion.

My troubles are great, exceeding weighty and burdenſome, and there are no ſorrows like unto my ſorrows; and this is that, that doth

ſo

to break my heart, and drink up my Spirit.

Answer.

This is Answered in a word. It is but a conceit of our own, to think our own troubles the worst, when as indeed they are but common temptations: But say the worst, grant that there be none like them; yet if we shall compare them either with that which we have deserved; or with that which *Christ* himself for us hath suffered; or with that weight of glory that shall be revealed, we shall then esteem them all as nothing. And as great as they are, if we would but only look up and consider duly from whence they come, even that alone would be enough to make us patient: For thus was it

it with *David*, he was dumb, and opened not his mouth, considering who did it, *Psal.* 39. 9.

The Fourteenth Question.

But my Affliction is such, that I am kept from enjoying the liberty of the House of God, and from praysing him in the Congregation.

Answer.

This must needs be troublesome to minds well affected; howbeit if *God* himself restrains us, we may then be sure that he requires not our presence. And in such a case, if our desires be with the Congregation, even that desire will be sufficient. Neither is the Lord so confined to the Congregation, but that he is near to all, that call upon him faith-

faithfully whereſoever they be, when neceſſity, and not neglect is the reaſon of their abſence. And beſides all this, if at any time, by reaſon of age or ſickneſs, we are not able to do thoſe things which we do deſire, and did performe in the times of our health and ſtrength, then ſhall a willing mind be well pleaſing unto God, and good deſires ſhall be accepted. Yea furthermore, this we muſt know for our conſolation, that a patient ſubmitting to the good will of *God*, is a *Worſhipping of him*, as appears by that, *Iob* 1. 20, 21. Where *Iob* is ſaid to Worſhip *God*, when he did with patience and contentedneſs ſubmit unto him. This is indeed, a glorifying of God, and herein we acknowledge him to be our God, and in thus ſubmitting we ſhall perform unto God as good

ſervice as ever we did in all our lives. For this is the paſſive part of true obedience, and the tryal of ſincerity in other things. To ſerve the Lord when all goes well with us, is much; and it is altogether as much, if not more, to reſolve to truſt in him, though he ſhould kill us. And if we can with *Job* hold faſt our Righteouſneſs, and in the hour of Temptation not fall away, this is a true note of pure Religion, and a manifeſt Argument of ſincerity and truth.

The Fifteenth Queſtion.

And yet after all this, I muſt die, and when a few years are come, I ſhall go the way whence I ſhall not return: and the fear of Death doth much amaze me.

Anſwer.

Answer.

Verily there is no solid reason why it should: for God hath given us victory over death it self, through our Lord *Jesus Christ*. The death of *Christ*, was the death of death. Death fastning upon him, to whom it was not due, lost it's sting, and so became less able to hurt those that had deserved it. *Christ* hath pulled out the sting of Death, by dying for sin; so that now, like a Bee, or Snake without a sting, it may buzze about us, and affright us, but it cannot hurt us. All the hurt that death can do to such as believe in the Lord *Jesus*, is to free them out of Prison, to put an end to their dayes of sin, to carry them home, to their Fathers house, to let them into their Masters joy, to pull

down thoſe mouldring Cottages, wherein they dwell, and to build them up to Immortality. For if we believe that *Jeſus* Died, and roſe again, them alſo that ſleep in *Jeſus*, ſhall God bring with him, and they ſhall be for ever with the Lord. And of this Happineſs the worſt kinde of Death, that can befall us, cannot deprive us. A Man may dye in Poverty, he may dye with Extreamity of Torments, he may dye by common Calamities, and yet he may dye in Faith; and ſo dying, his End ſhall be Peace: *For Bleſſed are the dead which dye in the Lord, even ſo ſaith the Spirit*, &c. *Rev.* 14. 13. So that if we did but throughly underſtand the Nature of Death, and what it is to the People of God, we ſhould be ſo far from being afraid of it, that with Saint *Paul*, we ſhould rather

deſire

desire to be dissolved, because then we should be with Christ, which is the best of all.

To shut up this Point, and so likewise the whole matter concerning Afflictions, this let me adde to the rest; That if we do desire to get Good by these Meditations, and to be upheld with Comfort in the time of Trouble, we must *Continue instant in prayer*. This is that Receipt, which the Holy Ghost prescribes to all sorts of Persons, against all manner of Grievances whatsoever, *James* 5, 13. This is that Remedy that is alwayes at hand, and never out of season. Yea, this is that Messenger, which being dispatched aright, was never sent empty away. Believe it, If a Man were in a case more desperate then Death, in a place worse then Hell, yet if there he could pray

heartily, he ſhould find Comfort and Strength, even beyond Hope: for our Prayers uſe to be with the utmoſt of our Hopes, if not beyond them; and yet God doth uſe to be better to us then our Prayers.

The Sixteenth Queſtion.

I See now that there is matter enough of ſolid Comfort in the Word of God. But the unevenneſs of my walking makes me to doubt, that I have no Part nor Portion in thoſe precious Promiſes, which God *hath made unto his People.*

Anſwer.

Promiſes I confeſſe that are miſapplied, can afford to the Soul no ſolid Comfort. But from our Failings we may not preſently conclude,

conclude, That they do not at all belong to us: For God looks upon the Heart; and where Ability is wanting, the Will is accepted.

Are not your Failings your Grief? are they not besides your Will? are they not contrary to the current of your Desires, and the main bent of your Resolutions and Endeavours? Is it not your Endeavour to do the Will of God, though it cost you the parting with the Sweetest Sins, even your own Iniquity? And is it not your Resolution, that you will not wickedly Depart from God? If it be so, then notwithstanding your Failings, you may say with *David*, *I have kept thy word*: For though this be not such a measure of keeping as the Law requireth, yet it is such a keeping as God accepteth: For he accounteth such as keep themselves

ſelves from wilfull ſins, upright and innocent, through *Chriſt* their Strength, and their Redeemer, as appears by that paſſage, *Pſal.* 19. 13.

And this is a true Rule, whereby to proceed in the judging of our ſelves. If a Man, that believes in *Chriſt* continues in an unknown Sin, that cannot hinder the uprightneſs of his heart, ſo the ignorance be not wilfull; but the leaſt touch of knowledge, or wilfulneſs mars ſincerity. So that if our failings be not wilful, though they be many; yet they cannot hinder our intereſt in the promiſes of God.

And what can we now object more? Do we doubt the truth of all theſe promiſes? Surely we need not: For God is not a Man that he ſhould lye, neither the Son of Man, that he ſhould repent:

pent: Hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not do it? Hath he ſaid, and ſhall it not come to paſs? Was he ever yet worſe then his word? And have not we had experience of his Love, as well upon our ſelves as others? Is he not the Faithful and True Witneſs, and a God that is moſt zealous of his own glory? Why then are we diſquieted? And why are our hearts dejected within us? Still truſt in God, make ſtraight ſteps to your feet; Pray for Faith in the Promiſes, and ſtir up your ſelf to take hold of God, tarry the Lords leaſure, and fear not; Light is *Sown* for the Righteous, and Gladneſs for ſuch as be upright in heart; It may lye buried in the ground out of ſight for a ſeaſon, it may be ſomewhat long in coming up, and very unlikely to come to any perfection; Nevertheleſs,

vertheleſs, in *due ſeaſon* we ſhall reap, if we faint not. And therefore caſt not away your confidence: For the worſt is paſt, the good is begun, the beſt is at hand: Lift up therefore the hands that hang down, and ſtrengthen the feeble knees; and run with patience the Race ſet before us; and being partakers of ſuch precious promiſes, let us think upon them, believe in them, and live in them: and in ſo doing, we ſhall rejoyce with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.

Hear the ſum of all: *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 1. *There is no Condemnation*, and there's our comfort: The ground hereof, is *Chriſt*; the way unto it, is by Faith to be in him; the evidence of it, *Is to walk not after*

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the Flesh, but after the Spirit. In the matter of merit, *Christ* is all; in matter of interest, and application, Faith is all; in matter of evidence and manifestation, *new obedience is all.* Nothing can free us from Condemnation, but *Christ*; nothing can give us interest in *Christ*, but *faith*; nothing can assure us that we do truly believe in *Christ*, and shall be delivered from condemnation, but a care to be obedient unto *Christ* in all things: wherefore let us so believe, and so live: for as many as walk according to this Rule, peace shall be upon them, and upon the *Israel* of *God.*

Now the God of hope fill us with all Joy and Peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the Power of the Holy Ghost, *Amen* and *Amen.*

In the multitude of the Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul, Psal. 94. 19.

FINIS.